

Amendments to the Claims:

1 - 11. (canceled)

12. (new) A mail opener for use with a postage meter having a print head which is movable between an operative printing position and a service position where printing cannot be effected, said mail opener comprising

B¹ a cutting device, the cutting device being movable between an operative position to open mail pieces and a retracted inoperative position in which the cutting device is maintained out of engagement with mail pieces, and

drive means for displacing the cutting device between said operative position and said retracted inoperative position, said drive means being operable by said postage meter to maintain said cutting device in said retracted inoperative position when the print head is printing postal indicia, and

means for moving the cutting device into the retracted inoperative position when the print head moves into the printing position.

13. (new) A mail opener as claimed in claim 12, further comprising mechanical interlocking means operatively connected between the print head and the cutting device.

14. (new) A mail opener as claimed in claim 13 wherein

the cutting device is carried by a movable member;

the interlocking means comprises a cam with which the movable member engages; and

operation of the cam causes movement of the cutting device between the operating position and the retracted inoperative position.

15. (new) A mail opener as claimed in claim 12, wherein the cutting device is a rotatably driven rotary blade.

16. (new) A mail opener as claimed in claim 12, further comprising driven feed means operative to draw the mail pieces past the cutting device.

17. (new) A mail opener as claimed in claim 16, wherein the feed means comprises a driven feed roller and a pressure roller co-operating therewith.

